



# EPISCOPAL NEWS SERVICE

The Episcopal Church Center • 815 Second Avenue, New York, NY 10017  
(212) 922-5385 • (800) 334-7626 • FAX (212) 557-5827 • Quest Inboxes: ENS/JAMES SOLHEIM/MICHAEL BARWELL

Office of News and Information  
James E. Solheim, Director  
Michael R. Barwell, Deputy Director

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# *news digest*

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97-1973D

## **Anglican bishops address issues of sexuality and international debt at Dallas meeting**

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The Dallas Statement said that "unbridled economic individualism" has led "both to the break-up of families and the escalation of international debt." And it drew a direct tie between "concern for the social good of nations" by relieving the debt and promoting "strong healthy families through faithful monogamous heterosexual relationships."

The bishops, most of them from Africa, expressed gratitude for the statement by the Second Anglican Encounter in the South, which met at Kuala Lumpur last February, and its assertion that "the integrity of our common witness is called into question because of new teaching and lapses in discipline relating to human sexuality occurring in parts of the North."

Drawing on scripture's "consistent teaching" about marriage and the family, the bishops said, "We share in the affirmation that the biblical sexual norm is clear" and that "the church has no authority to set aside clear biblical teaching by ordaining non-celibate homosexuals or authorizing the blessing of same sex relationships."

Drawing a distinction between homosexuality as an orientation and the "gay" agenda as a socio-political identity, the statement concluded, "It is not acceptable for a pro-gay agenda to be smuggled into the church's program or foisted upon our people--and we will not permit it."

The four-day "Anglican Life and Witness Conference," followed by visits to parishes in the Dallas-Ft. Worth area, was jointly sponsored by the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies and the Ekklesia Society, a member of the American Anglican Council that stresses biblical orthodoxy. It was hosted and financially supported by the Diocese of Dallas.



97-1974D

## **Traditionalists in England and the US moving towards separate provinces**

(ENS) Traditionalists both in the United States and in England are moving towards separate provinces.

The Episcopal Synod of America (ESA) has clarified its goals in the wake of the 1997 General Convention in Philadelphia. It will now seek to establish an Orthodox Province of the Anglican Communion in North America. "We will no longer speak of a mission to be the church within the Episcopal Church for we have concluded that the institutional Episcopal Church has lost the will to be reformed," said ESA president Peter Moriarty.

The ESA has made it clear it will minister to individuals and parishes without regard for diocesan boundaries or the permission of diocesan bishops. It has sent a letter to parishes in what it regards as "hostile" dioceses where the bishop is not of "orthodox conviction," inviting them to apply for oversight by an ESA bishop.

In a letter to diocesan bishops October 2, Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning said that he had received phone calls from bishops alerting him to the packet sent by ESA to "senior wardens in 25 dioceses whose bishops had signed the Statement of Koinonia." (The statement, presented by Bishop John Spong of Newark to the House of Bishops during its debate on sexuality in 1994, says that sexual orientation is "morally neutral," that "faithful, monogamous, committed" relationships of gays and lesbians should be honored and that gay clergy could serve as "wholesome examples to the flock of Christ.")

Bishop Allen Bartlett, Jr. of Pennsylvania wrote to his clergy September 18 to warn that such an invitation from the ESA "is a clear invitation to schism and anarchy." If a parish extended an invitation to another bishop "that parish would violate the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church."

In a parallel development, 500 traditionalists met in London in late September at the fourth annual Forward in Faith conference and agreed to work towards an independent and autonomous province in the Church of England by the next century.

Executive Director Stephen Parkinson said that one option would be a unilateral declaration of independence, creating a province that would follow Anglican rites but seek affiliation with another confession. Bishop Edwin Barnes, one of the "flying bishops" who now minister to traditionalists in the Church of England, suggested that an affiliation with one of the Orthodox churches might be a possibility.

97-1975D

## **Diocese of New Jersey outlines strategy for healing and reconciliation**

(ENS) In a report from its wellness committee released October 6 and mailed to all clergy and parishes, the Diocese of New Jersey launched what it hopes will be a plan of action for healing and reconciliation in a deepening conflict over a range of issues.

Among the major proposals are a support group for Bishop Joe Morris Doss, monthly



mentoring visits by a retired bishop "to observe the process of healing and act as an advisor on all matters," retreats and conferences to rebuild trust with clergy, efforts to address the "hurt and frustration" of blacks, improved communication and staff structure, and increased financial accountability.

The plan builds on the May report of a consultant, the Rev. Peter Steinke, that painted a portrait of a "quiet, in-grown, parochial and conservative" diocese that is large and diverse, riddled with divisions. The report also indicated that some factions in the diocese laid much of the blame at the feet of Doss while others argued that most of the problems had deep roots going back for many years before the election of Doss in 1994.

In an October 13 letter to the diocese, Doss said that he was "personally committed to implementing the proposals for healing contained in the wellness report, especially addressing and remedying those criticisms of my own behavior, and I am asking all members of the diocese to join in the process to help me by forgiving each other, healing our wounds, and rolling up our sleeves to do the hard work of rebuilding trust in each other."

The bishop's promise to cooperate "was well received but may not be enough to quell rampant mistrust," said the Rev. Peter Stimpson, chair of the wellness committee, in an interview. Even those who have expressed support for the bishop are discouraged by his apparent inability to acknowledge his own role in the hurt that many are expressing--and find a way to respond, he observed. He said that it was dangerous to assume that the criticism was coming from "a small group of people," arguing that "a wide cross section of the diocese" is represented in the criticism.

97-1976D

## **Episcopalians join 'sacred assembly' of Promise Keepers in Washington, D.C.**

(ENS) "I have to admit I was impressed," said the Rev. Benjamin Shambaugh, rector of St. John's Episcopal Church in Olney, Maryland. "I went to Promise Keepers' with a good deal of skepticism. What I saw that day on the Mall was not a series of resolutions that were debated and watered down on a convention floor. What I saw was close to a million men willing to 'walk the walk' and literally turn their lives and their world around."

In an apparent quest for spiritual renewal, hundreds of thousands of men from across the country converged on Washington, D.C., for a six-hour "sacred assembly" on Oct. 4 to sing, pray, and confess their sins of racism, infidelity, and abandonment of their families. They sought a collective self-absolution and were exhorted by Promise Keepers founder Bill McCartney to become active in their home church.

Characterized as "muscular Christianity" meeting in a "macho-free zone," the revival meeting brought together men of all ages, races, denominations, and political persuasions to focus on family values, take responsibility for their actions, and be better husbands and fathers. They pledged to help lead their families, communities and the nation to salvation through Jesus Christ. Unofficial estimates of the crowd ranged from 400,000 to 750,000.

Men from across the Episcopal Church flew in chartered jets or drove all night in cars and buses to join the rally.



An estimated three busloads and more individuals -- including Bishop Robert Duncan -- made the trip from the Diocese of Pittsburgh, said the Rev. Neil Brown, rector of St. Martin's in Monroeville, Pennsylvania. Noting that two previous Promise Keepers rallies have been staged in Three Rivers Stadium in Pittsburgh, Brown said that Promise Keepers "has become a significant part of the Episcopal Church here. And men are coming for the same reason from all over the U.S., because this has struck a chord that we are called to care for our families and to pay attention to our spiritual life.

The rally was not without its critics. A counter-demonstration by the National Organization for Women (NOW), and the Texas-based American Atheists, Inc., chanted and shouted slogans accusing Promise Keepers of "checking their wives and daughters at the door," and promoting a male-dominated society terrified of equal rights for women and minority groups in the midst of "a cultural angst" about the role men play in society.

Some critics also accuse the Promise Keepers leadership of a hidden conservative political agenda, tying the group to right-wing Republican politicians and lobbyists, many of whom attended but who were forbidden to address the crowd or distribute conservative literature. The only book distributed was commemorative edition of a New Testament.

"They fruit of what I've seen is that men will come back home and reshape their priorities," said the Rev. Thad Butcher, rector of St. John's Episcopal Church in Butte, Montana. Promise Keepers are "seeking to break down the walls of denominationalism and discrimination," and are "serving as a catalyst. The revival to come will happen at the local level.

"The institutional church is sometimes so protective that we miss the point," said Butcher, who has attended the past five General Conventions. "We try to look so politically correct rather than seeing where God is at work. We need to be for it!"

97-1978D

## **New Russian law protects Orthodox Church**

(ENS) Despite protests from religious and government leaders around the world, Russian President Boris Yeltsin signed a new law in late September guaranteeing the Russian Orthodox Church a virtual monopoly on religious activity in post-Communist Russia.

The controversial bill, which Yeltsin had vetoed earlier this year, ensures the Russian Orthodox Church takes a place at the top of a new hierarchy of religious groups, at the same time curtailing the activities and rights of new "sects," including the Roman Catholic Church.

But Russian Orthodox relationships with the Church of England and the Episcopal Church are now "among the warmest ever," according the Bishop Roger White of Milwaukee, who is co-chair of the coordinating committee for relationships with the Russian Orthodox Church.

"Russia has been inundated by mainline, evangelical and religious sects," White said. "They were being overwhelmed by them." He added that other Christian denominations' efforts to convert Russians--including members of Orthodox congregations--broke long-standing agreements among members of the World Council of Churches not to proselytize, or convert, members of other churches. "They just didn't know what to do."



White added that the Episcopal Church's position has been to support and not be critical of the Russian Orthodox Church. "We are their closest friends, and they are feeling very lonely right now," he said.

"It is even more essential that we continue to build on the very practical relationship between our two churches," said the Rev. David Perry, ecumenical relations officer for the Episcopal Church. "Trust, mutual respect and partnership are key elements to ensure a continuing witness together in the midst of the many challenges that face the people of Russian and the Russian Orthodox Church."

While the measure pledges "respect" for Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Buddhism, it accords secondary status to any church or religious organization which has not been present and registered in the country for at least 15 years, or before the collapse of the Soviet empire in the early 1990s.

White discounted dire predictions of significant hardship by all religious organizations. "There will be a leveling time for them to sort out who should be doing what. Although it looks harsh on religious freedom, it is not unexpected."

97-1979D

## **Technology breakthroughs to enhance communications at Lambeth in 1998**

(ENS) Anglican bishops from around the world attending the 1998 Lambeth Conference in Canterbury, England, next summer will be able to keep in touch with their dioceses and each other using the Internet.

"The bishops and conference staff will be sending out news and other information in multi-lingual forms as fast as possible," said the Rev. Peter Moore, an Australian priest serving as a missionary in Uruguay who is heading the electronics media planning team for Lambeth. "They will be able to keep in touch with home and people at home will see the value and usefulness of conferencing here. It will be a two-way deal."

The Lambeth Conference is held every 10 years at the invitation of the archbishop of Canterbury. An international communications planning team for Lambeth recently met at the University of Kent, where an estimated 1,250 bishops, their spouses and staff members will gather for three weeks in July and August next year. Plans include operating a news service, establishing a campus electronic mail system, connecting the conference to the worldwide Internet and establishing web pages for some dioceses or provinces.

"We will be disseminating news and information throughout the Anglican Communion more quickly and widely than at any time in history," said the Rev. Kris Lee, director of telecommunications for the Episcopal Church.

Basic services to be offered on campus include electronic mail and hands-on demonstrations for all bishops. More traditional communications devices such as mail, telephone and facsimile services also will be provided at the communications center.

Many of the advanced telecommunications plans for Lambeth are the result of recent breakthroughs in hardware, software, and internet capabilities, the planners explained.



97-1973

## **Anglican bishops address issues of sexuality and international debt at Dallas meeting**

by James Solheim

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And it drew a direct tie between "concern for the social good of nations" by relieving the debt and promoting "strong healthy families through faithful monogamous heterosexual relationships."

The bishops, most of them from Africa, expressed gratitude for the statement by the Second Anglican Encounter in the South, which met at Kuala Lumpur last February, and its assertion that "the integrity of our common witness is called into question because of new teaching and lapses in discipline relating to human sexuality occurring in parts of the North."

Drawing on scripture's "consistent teaching" about marriage and the family, the bishops said, "We share in the affirmation that the biblical sexual norm is clear" and that "the church has no authority to set aside clear biblical teaching by ordaining non-celibate homosexuals or authorizing the blessing of same sex relationships."

### **Pro-gay agenda not acceptable**

Drawing a distinction between homosexuality as an orientation and the "gay" agenda as a socio-political identity, the statement concluded, "It is not acceptable for a pro-gay agenda to be smuggled into the church's program or foisted upon our people--and we will not permit it."

Citing the theological components of a "shared and coherent orthodox Anglican framework," the bishops identified issues that require "further reflection at this time in our communion." They included "the centrality of the authority of the scriptures in our understand and interpretation of the world" and "the ministry of the obedient Christian community" in its "bearing witness to the power and adequacy of this understanding and interpretation of the world."

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### **The reality of broken fellowship**

The bishops called on the Lambeth Conference to make the meeting of primates of member churches "a place of appeal for those Anglican bodies who are oppressed, marginalized, or denied faithful episcopal oversight by their own bishops. In such situations,"



they argued, "a way must be found to provide pastoral support, oversight and formal ecclesiastical relationships for faithful people."

"Those who choose beliefs and practices outside the boundaries of the historic faith must understand they are separating themselves from communion, and leading others astray," the statement concluded. And it warned that the "reality of broken fellowship can extend to individuals, congregations or even whole dioceses and provinces."

### **Dialogue before action**

In an article describing the conference, the Rev. Vinay Samuel, executive director of the Oxford Centre, said that the dozen Episcopal Church bishops who attended "spoke in terms of near despair at their inability to influence the course of events" in the American church. He said that they received a surprise when "younger bishops from Africa declared that they were not prepared to wait until the Lambeth Conference and subsequent committees to sort out the issue of homosexuality" because their witness was being "gravely damaged by some of the public pronouncements concerning sexuality and the church from some North American Episcopalians."

While Samuel and Archbishop David Gitari of Kenya, the other chair of the conference, were surprised at the bluntness of the statement they agreed that the bishops had every right to express their strong convictions. "This is a theological statement, not a political one," Samuel said in an interview. While admitting that some may seek to use the statement to support their own agenda, for the bishops that possibility was "farthest from their minds."

Samuel said that the Kuala Lumpur statement was a "clear warning" that parts of the Anglican Communion are seeking "dialogue before action, as a way of mutual responsibility" while the Dallas Statement was a "plea" to churches in the North to stop making decisions that breed disunity. Both statements share "a common spirit saying that we are going in the wrong direction," Samuel said. "One of the key intentions of the Dallas conference is to enable the church in the South and all those committed to orthodox Christian faith to contribute to the shaping of the theological direction of the communion...."

### **Kenyan bishops express frustration**

During a stop in New York following the conference, two Kenyan bishops repeated the fear and frustration that was expressed in the Dallas Statement.

"It is bad biblical exegesis to accept homosexuality," said Bishop Peter Njenga of the Diocese of Mt. Kenya South. "The church is being squeezed into a secular mode."

He and Bishop Stephen Kewasis of Kitale agreed that the Lambeth Conference could be messy because of the frustration that is building in many parts of the Anglican Communion. And they said that the decision by the archbishop of Canterbury to establish a commission to deal with sexuality is nothing but "a clever way to avoid the issues." Like the Eames Commission, which dealt with maintaining communion while some provinces were consecrating women to the episcopate, "it will end up dealing with a reality and won't provide a fair dialogue. We will go home with a heavy heart. It is a question of orthodoxy."

They also expressed a fear that the "overwhelming" presence of American bishops would make any open dialogue more difficult.



### **What is orthodoxy?**

For Bishop Anand Chandu Lal of the Church in North India, seeking a definition of what is orthodox can unleash destructive forces in the church. His diocese in Amritsar has been embroiled for 15 years in a struggle with a group of dissenters, tied to the continuing churches in America. "They took trust, as well as properties and money," he said. "We have suffered a great deal of agony and pain over this issue of orthodoxy."

Although he came late to the Dallas conference, he noted when he arrived that "people seemed to be very angry." Initially excited by the opportunity to join in a pre-Lambeth discussion of the issues, and impressed by the materials he received from the Oxford Centre, he said that he now feels "betrayed" by the decision to criticize a partner church in the Anglican Communion on its own turf. He said that he would "categorically disown" the statement.

### **Clarity and commitment**

The Rev. Bill Atwood, general secretary of the Ekklesia Society, expressed nothing but enthusiasm for the Dallas meeting and especially the visit by the bishops to 10 local settings for worship and conversation. "They helped give the Anglican Communion a human face," he said in an interview.

Atwood has spent several years establishing links with bishops and dioceses around the world and said that he has returned very encouraged by the "heart, life and vitality" of the churches. He said that he was "humbled and convicted by the clarity and commitment" they expressed. The archbishop of Sudan, for example, told an audience that he wanted to "help you rediscover the fire that you sent to us."

For Atwood the Dallas Statement represents a majority opinion in the Anglican Communion because, in his observation, most of the churches "share a common worldview in line with the historic, biblical faith." Unlike previous Lambeth Conferences, where the voice of Third World bishops was muted, he is convinced that the bishops of the South will have a significant impact on next summer's meeting.

**--James Solheim is director of news and information for the Episcopal Church.**

97-1974

## **Traditionalists in England and the US moving towards separate provinces**

**by James Solheim**

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the Anglican Communion in North America. "We will no longer speak of a mission to be the church within the Episcopal Church for we have concluded that the institutional Episcopal Church has lost the will to be reformed," said ESA president Peter Moriarty.

The ESA has made it clear it will minister to individuals and parishes without regard for diocesan boundaries or the permission of diocesan bishops. It has sent a letter to parishes in what it regards as "hostile" dioceses where the bishop is not of "orthodox conviction," inviting them to apply for oversight by an ESA bishop.

In a letter to diocesan bishops October 2, Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning said that he had received phone calls from bishops alerting him to the packet sent by ESA to "senior wardens in 25 dioceses whose bishops had signed the Statement of Koinonia." (The statement, presented by Bishop John Spong of Newark to the House of Bishops during its debate on sexuality in 1994, says that sexual orientation is "morally neutral," that "faithful, monogamous, committed" relationships of gays and lesbians should be honored and that gay clergy could serve as "wholesome examples to the flock of Christ.")

Browning said that the issue "will need to be dealt with locally by diocesan bishops as they arise," but he expressed his "tremendous support for those bishops who are in this difficult situation."

Bishop Allen Bartlett, Jr. of Pennsylvania wrote to his clergy September 18 to warn that such an invitation from the ESA "is a clear invitation to schism and anarchy." If a parish extended an invitation to another bishop "that parish would violate the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church."

### **ESA claims Massachusetts parish**

In what could be regarded as the first step in implementing the strategy, Moriarty and Bishop Edward MacBurney, the retired bishop of Quincy, visited St. Paul's Church in Brockton, Massachusetts, September 28. According to Moriarty, the parish separated formally from the diocese a year ago and was the first church to respond to the invitation issued in the Good Shepherd Declaration, published by the ESA after its post-General Convention meeting.

Speaking to the congregation, Moriarty said that the ESA was offering episcopal oversight "on an interim basis, until the ESA council meets in November."

Sources in Massachusetts said that the diocese was aware of the "unauthorized visit." The Rev. Ed Rodman said that it was "a very serious matter," adding that the bishop and standing committee were looking into the situation. The rector of the parish has been convicted of misconduct and the case has been appealed. In the meantime, the parish is still under the care of the diocese.

Moriarty said in August that the synod was likely to respond to a request from St. Paul's and added, "We expect that there will be other such visitations as appropriate requests from parishes come in."

The ESA also expressed the hope that, by the time its bishops arrive at the Lambeth Conference of Anglican bishops next summer, it would be clear that an orthodox province in North America would be a reality. "We will take our case to the Lambeth Conference of bishops next summer and to other provinces throughout the Communion who are supportive of our cause," the ESA said in a statement.



Moriarty said that "we are not sure what that province will look like," but he said that ESA was "working closely" with English traditionalists because they share a "general convergence in moving toward an orthodox objective."

### **New province in the Church of England?**

Five hundred traditionalists met in London in late September at the fourth annual Forward in Faith conference and agreed to work towards an independent and autonomous province in the Church of England by the next century.

Executive Director Stephen Parkinson said that one option would be a unilateral declaration of independence, creating a province that would follow Anglican rites but seek affiliation with another confession. Bishop Edwin Barnes, of the "flying bishops" who now minister to traditionalists in the Church of England, suggested that an affiliation with one of the Orthodox churches might be a possibility.

A spokesman for the Church of England said that a third province (York and Canterbury are the two provinces now) in the church would need approval of the General Synod and, since the Church of England is an established church, it might need the approval of the British Parliament. If it sought affiliation with the Anglican Communion the Anglican Consultative Council might get involved.

"A global province might not be entirely feasible," Parkinson told Ecumenical News International. Traditionalists were more likely to form a series of linked provinces instead, although he said that the support was strong enough in England and the U.S. to merit separate provinces.

**--James Solheim is the Episcopal Church's director of news and information.**

97-1975

## **Diocese of New Jersey outlines strategy for healing and reconciliation**

**by James Solheim**

(ENS) In a report from its wellness committee released October 6 and mailed to all clergy and parishes, the Diocese of New Jersey launched what it hopes will be a plan of action for healing and reconciliation.

Among the major proposals are a support group for Bishop Joe Morris Doss, monthly mentoring visits by another retired bishop "to observe the process of healing and act as an advisor on all matters," retreats and conferences to rebuild trust with clergy, efforts to address the "hurt and frustration" of blacks, improved communication and staff structure, and increased financial accountability.

The plan builds on the May report of a consultant, the Rev. Peter Steinke, that painted a portrait of a "quiet, in-grown, parochial and conservative" diocese that is large and



diverse, riddled with divisions. The report also indicated that some factions in the diocese laid much of the blame at the feet of Doss while others argued that most of the problems had deep roots going back for many years before the election of Doss in 1994.

When the attacks on Doss escalated, alleging alcohol abuse among other failures, Doss sought the help and advice of the church's chief pastor, Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning. In a letter that accompanied the wellness committee report, Browning expressed his hope that the people of the diocese would see the report as "a constructive and hopeful document" and a "new way forward."

In an October 13 letter to the diocese, Doss said that he was "personally committed to implementing the proposals for healing contained in the wellness report, especially addressing and remedying those criticisms of my own behavior, and I am asking all members of the diocese to join in the process to help me by forgiving each other, healing our wounds, and rolling up our sleeves to do the hard work of rebuilding trust in each other."

### **A spirit of mutual trust**

In conflict situations "a spirit of mistrust can develop very quickly," Browning noted, and "judgements can be made that exaggerate the original problems and make them all the more difficult to address." In the face of "allegations of possible misuse of alcohol and questionable financial management on Bishop Doss' part," Browning said that he agreed with the bishop's request for "a professional evaluation."

After an August evaluation at the Menninger Clinic in Kansas, Browning reported in his letter that the clinic report "notes that he does not at this time exhibit characteristic alcoholic behavior." The diocesan treasurer assured Browning that "consistent audits of diocesan funds... have shown no irregularities." Doss and Browning agreed that it would be helpful to "invite a senior bishop to serve as mentor" and announced that Bishop George Hunt, retired bishop of Rhode Island, had agreed to spend about a week each month in the diocese.

Citing Hunt's "experience, compassion and enormous good sense," Browning expressed a confidence that "he will be an objective listener to both the bishop and the diocese. I believe his presence will help to restore a spirit of mutual trust and improve communication."

### **Healing and forgiveness**

Deploring a range of accusations in the press, Doss said that he has "refused to allow myself to be pulled into hurtful, unprofessional and inappropriate public argument." Instead he has "patiently trusted in the proper unfolding of events and knowledge, allowing the truth to be revealed as our time-tested judicial and ecclesiastical institutions operate systematically."

Interviews by Steinke earlier this year revealed that many found Doss "engaging, amiable, charming, a bishop who is "intelligent...warm and sensitive." Others complained that he was manipulative, arrogant, condescending and displayed a leadership style that was impatient and compulsive. The consultant said that about half the diocese occupied middle ground, conceding that the bishop had problems but expressing an eagerness to move on with the church's mission. The other half, he estimated, was split almost evenly between

opposition and supporters.

### **Lawsuit complicates search for healing**

A story in the *Trenton Times* the day after the wellness committee report was released alleged that a seminary professor had been asked by the bishop to write an unflattering letter about one of Doss's critics who was being interviewed for a call to another parish--and that Doss lied when confronted.

The Rev. Alan French is accusing the Rev. Charles Rush, who teaches at New Brunswick Theological Seminary, of defamation for writing a letter at the urging of Doss to the search committee at St. Luke's Church in Gladstone. In a July 25 deposition Rush described a meeting with an "emotionally distraught" bishop who admitted that he had lied to others about his discussions with Rush.

The diocesan chancellor, Richard Catenacci, said in a news account that he was "astounded" that the deposition became public and that he was "ethically bound not to comment." Others said that making the lawsuit public was just another example of how desperate the bishop's critics were to oust him.

### **People want change**

The bishop's promise to cooperate "was well received but may not be enough to quell rampant mistrust," said the Rev. Peter Stimpson, chair of the wellness committee, in an interview. Even those who have expressed support for the bishop are discouraged by his apparent inability to acknowledge his own role in the hurt that many are expressing--and find a way to respond, he observed. He said that it was dangerous to assume that the criticism was coming from "a small group of people," arguing that "a wide cross section of the diocese" is represented in the criticism.

While admitting that some of the problems identified by Steinke predate the election of Doss, "healing can't happen if the bishop doesn't see the problem and change his behavior," Stimpson said. "People are tired of words, they want to see some change in behavior." He is afraid that bringing in a mentoring bishop "may be too little, too late." And he predicted that the "financial revolt could spread," that the middle ground identified by Steinke could move to open opposition. "Even people in the center are saying enough is enough." He added that an independent audit of the bishop's discretionary funds would be a good first step and might help restore confidence.

The Rev. Roger Hamilton, president of the standing committee, shares Stimpson's frustration and pessimism. "It is a very difficult situation," he said, "and it is not getting any better." He deplores the deepening factionalism in the diocese, pitting people against each other. "People are uniting around everything but Jesus," he said.

### **Character assassination**

The Rev. Walt Zelley, a rector in Metuchen who is senior warden of the diocesan council, said in an interview that he finds it "incomprehensible that a group of priests can act this way. Nothing the bishop has done warrants these attacks. How can they treat a human being and his family this way?" He is convinced that a small group, "maybe 10 percent," has launched an organized campaign to convince the vast majority in the center that the diocese



is out of control and that there is no way forward.

"Let's get back to the business of reconciliation, let's talk, let's get the diocese back on track," Zellely said, adding that he was "infuriated with the character assassination by innuendo directed at the bishop." And he contended that Steinke made a serious mistake in allowing critics of the bishop anonymity. "If someone has concrete evidence against the bishop, let's see it or let's stop the faulty allegations," he said.

"The last thing I want to see is a bishop removed," Zellely said. If the critics succeed in their efforts to force a resignation, "the diocese would be in the hands of some pretty sick, malicious people. And the psychic wounds would be terrible."

Zellely said that he sees little evidence of all the "wounded souls" throughout the diocese, as alleged by the critics. Instead he sees "all kinds of hopeful signs in the diocese. Given a chance we could do wonderful things for the kingdom of God. Why don't people just forgive Doss so we can get going with our real tasks?"

—James Solheim is the Episcopal Church's director of news and information.

97-1976

## **Episcopalians join 'sacred assembly' of Promise Keepers in Washington, D.C.**

by Michael Barwell

(ENS) "I have to admit I was impressed," said the Rev. Benjamin Shambaugh, rector of St. John's Episcopal Church in Olney, Maryland. "I went to Promise Keepers' with a good deal of skepticism. What I saw that day on the Mall was not a series of resolutions that were debated and watered down on a convention floor. What I saw was close to a million men willing to 'walk the walk' and literally turn their lives and their world around."

In an apparent quest for spiritual renewal, hundreds of thousands of men from across the country converged on Washington, D.C., for a six-hour "sacred assembly" on Oct. 4 to sing, pray, and confess their sins of racism, infidelity, and abandonment of their families. They sought a collective self-absolution and were exhorted by Promise Keepers founder Bill McCartney to become active in their home church.

"We propose that every man returns home and submits to the authority of a local shepherd. . . . You have to say to your pastor 'How high, how far and how much?'" McCartney told the gathering, according to press reports.

Characterized as "muscular Christianity" meeting in a "macho-free zone," the revival meeting brought together men of all ages, races, denominations, and political persuasions to focus on family values, take responsibility for their actions, and be better husbands and fathers. They pledged to help lead their families, communities and the nation to salvation through Jesus Christ. Unofficial estimates of the crowd ranged from 400,000 to 750,000.

The rally theme "Standing in the Gap" was derived from the passage in Ezekiel where

the Lord looked without success for a righteous man "to stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it."

"I was critical about what I thought they would say about women, and their lack of concern for issues of race," Shambaugh said. "I thought it would be light on theology and heavy on political views that were not my own. I was proven wrong on each point.

"Instead," Shambaugh said, "Washington echoed with the sound of a great celebration of diversity and a call for inclusiveness, coming not from the gothic stones on Mount St. Alban [the Washington National Cathedral] but from the voices of a myriad of men lying prone on their faces or down on their knees in the dirt of the Mall."

### **Powerful emotional experiences**

Men from across the Episcopal Church, including congregations in Pittsburgh, Montana, Nebraska, Michigan, and all along the eastern seaboard, flew in chartered jets or drove all night in cars and buses to join the rally.

An estimated three busloads and more individuals--including Bishop Robert Duncan -- made the trip from the Diocese of Pittsburgh, said the Rev. Neil Brown, rector of St. Martin's in Monroeville, Pennsylvania. Noting that two previous rallies have been staged in Three Rivers Stadium in Pittsburgh, Brown said that Promise Keepers "has become a significant part of the Episcopal Church here. And men are coming for the same reason from all over the U.S., because this has struck a chord that we are called to care for our families and to pay attention to our spiritual life.

"God gave us a job to do, and we're not doing a very good job," Brown said. "Promise Keepers is helping us to see that." He said that the rally was a very powerful emotional experience for many men. "When we talked about very personal things, like responsibility for our wives and families, a deep emotion was tapped for everyone." For many men, the emotion was expressed in tears and, Brown said, "it was like when we meet Jesus for the first time. The Bible is full of stories about meeting God and responding in tears."

He warned, however, against basing the movement on a purely emotional response or withdrawing into "separatist groups which divide the church" between men who have or haven't been converted by Promise Keepers. "What we need are real meat and potatoes" in small group events which bring men back to the local church. "We're birthing a significant local men's ministry here," Brown said, adding, "Hopefully this is a wake-up call to us denominations that God is interested in our hearts."

### **Fresh and spirit-filled**

Jim King, a 48-year-old dentist from St. Alban's Episcopal Church in Bay City, Michigan, agreed that it was an emotional weekend that is "still fresh and spirit-filled."

King was part of a group of 46 men from eight congregations in the Diocese of Eastern Michigan who rented a bus and drove 12 hours to Washington in time to see the sun rise over the Capitol building and an already jammed Mall.

"I was already crying at 8 a.m. as we sang 'Holy, Holy, Holy' with all those men. I felt God's presence in me and my eyes weren't dry most of the day. The commitment I made was to God and to myself. Making that commitment in front of other men helps make it



more concrete . . . it's different than you'd do in a church."

A life-long Episcopalian, married, a father of two and a grandfather, King admitted he would consider himself a conservative. "But this is not a sexist thing. Or a political thing with an agenda," he said. "We have to commit ourselves to daily prayer. And my wife would attest that this has made me a better husband."

King said the event has opened up opportunities for him to talk to his office staff and to patients who have asked him about his participation in the rally. Almost all of them have been supportive.

### **Critics abound**

The rally was not without its critics. A counter-demonstration by the National Organization for Women (NOW), the Texas-based American Atheists, Inc., chanted and shouted slogans accusing Promise Keepers of "checking their wives and daughters at the door," and promoting a male-dominated society terrified of equal rights for women and minority groups in the midst of "a cultural angst" about the role men play in society.

Equal Partners in Faith, an ecumenical coalition of clergy, met in St. Margaret's Episcopal Church in Washington to protest Promise Keepers' conservative rhetoric and to talk about equality of men and women in Christian homes, according to press reports.

Some critics also accuse the Promise Keepers leadership of a hidden conservative political agenda, tying the group to right-wing Republican politicians and lobbyists, many of whom attended but who were forbidden to address the crowd or distribute conservative literature. The only book distributed was a commemorative edition of the New Testament.

"Discussions about the Promise Keepers carried out in Episcopal and ecumenical women's gatherings are both optimistic and fearful," said Ann Smith, director of women in ministry and mission for the Episcopal Church. "We feel optimistic about the thousands of men who, through their own personal conversion, are promising to be better husbands, fathers, brothers and sons. What we fear is the political agenda of the hierarchy. Will they try to influence these well-meaning men to help carry out political actions that oppose equality for all people? Or will they do as they promise and be a revival movement for men?"

"The women are watching and praying for a men's revival that will work in partnership with the women's movement to bring justice and freedom for all," Smith said.

### **A 'terrifying event?'**

"Is it terrifying? Yes, it is!" said the Rev. Bob Lambert an area missionary serving two congregations in Lexington and Arapahoe in the Diocese of Nebraska. "To see that many men willing to be Christians, and be inclusive, and not claim power" is threatening to many observers.

Lambert went to Washington with parishioner Charlie Cadwell, who paid for his air fare and expenses as a gift. "I went to see what this would do for my ministry," Lambert said, acknowledging that he had no first-hand experience but was wary of a conservative agenda, and forewarned against abuse of control, especially in relationships between husbands and wives.

Characterizing himself as a "moderate conservative" who is a Nashota House graduate

with "evangelical experience," Lambert also noted that he was admittedly "emotionally detached," primarily because he also is a trained group therapist. His professional observation is that he saw "no sense of emotive coercion" to force emotional responses from the men. Instead, he saw "permission to react or not react. It was a safe place to do that. Crying is not a loss of the male image," he observed. "It's not breaking down but opening up to God's spirit."

"It is easy for me to understand how fearful it may be to some people to watch almost a million men on their knees asking for forgiveness, the power to follow God's will in their lives, and to proclaim God's love and desire to have a relationship with all mankind," Lambert said. "It is a witness to God's love empowering men to act in humility and love in a world that knows this is much more powerful than position, authority or control."

"I was impressed. There's no getting around that," Lambert said. "To get men into the church, to get them to be active in their churches, and to build up the church of Jesus Christ -- there's nothing wrong with that."

### **What's in the future?**

"The fruit of what I've seen is that men will come back home and reshape their priorities," said the Rev. Thad Butcher, rector of St. John's Episcopal Church in Butte, Montana. Although he said he was "still processing" his reactions, the 43-year-old Butcher agreed with others that "the basic message is that your Christian faith doesn't have to be put on the back shelf." They can admit to themselves and others that "they can be actively involved and say 'I'm part of this, too.'"

Butcher, married and the father of three, said that men attending Promise Keepers' events learn that "men need to know that they are loved and yet can be tender and find places in their hearts."

While it is "fair to say that it is a conservative movement," Butcher said, Promise Keepers "are speaking to issues of the heart, not to the political or cultural. Men have a desire to do it right. It's calling people back to Jesus Christ and the foundations of the faith."

Butcher said that Promise Keepers are "seeking to break down the walls of denominationalism and discrimination," and are "serving as a catalyst. The revival to come will happen at the local level."

"The institutional church is sometimes so protective that we miss the point," said Butcher, who has attended the past five General Conventions. "We try to look so politically correct rather than seeing where God is at work. We need to be for it!"

**-- Michael Barwell is deputy director of news and information for the Episcopal Church.**



97-1977

## **Promise Keepers helps moves man 'off the fence'**

by **Karin Hamilton**

(ENS) Michael Souza, 40, described his faith as "on the fence" before he went to the Promise Keepers' rally in Washington. Now, he's off the fence, sure of his belief in Jesus Christ.

What's more, his wife Cathy, 35, says her husband is more thoughtful and considerate than he used to be. "We're on a high, now," she said. "I hope we can walk the journey together. It's what I've always prayed for."

Mike and Cathy have been married for 12 years. They have worked together at a bakery they owned, and for the past five years, at a local food importing company. The Souzas have two children, Marissa, 6, and Michael, 2. Both Michael and Cathy were raised as Roman Catholics but religion hadn't played an important role in their lives until after the children were born. At Cathy's initiative, they started attending Grace Episcopal Church in Old Saybrook, Connecticut.

Though both worked outside the home, Cathy took the lead in their spiritual life, and also had almost full responsibility for domestic chores, including cleaning and shopping. Following the rally in Washington, however, she said that a change in Michael's behavior has surprised her. While rushing through errands one recent evening, which Cathy had to do before she could go to play in a basketball game, "Mike volunteered to go to the grocery store and take the kids with him, so I could go play basketball," she said, adding that he'd never been in tune to her needs like that before. He's also volunteered to wash her car, joined her in her daily exercise walks, and has remained enthusiastic about going to church.

### **'On a fence'**

Michael described himself, before the rally, as "on a fence, watching his wife walk the path." He said it was from years of not believing, and a lack of support from the faith in which he'd been raised. While they both received a warm welcome at the Episcopal Church, and even participated in Bible study with several other couples, Michael said he still struggled to overcome those years of not believing.

He went to the rally at the encouragement of another man in the church, Sylvester Thomas, who had tried to get him to attend another Promise Keepers rally, in Syracuse. Up to the end, confessed Souza, "I had this attitude at home, not wanting to get to the church" to get on the bus for Washington. Once there, he said he was overwhelmed by the sheer number of men. "We went through the whole day, just watching the men come down the hill, a constant line of men, it just kept coming."

"In my eyes and my heart I realized that everyone there was different, and I wasn't there to pass judgment on people's freedom of choice. When they announced for us to yell out what church or denomination we were, you couldn't make out anything people were saying. Then they asked us to yell out the one common reason we were there - Jesus Christ. When he counted to three, and a million men yelled out Jesus Christ, it was just so clear ... that's when I shook, and my whole body was overtaken with goosebumps." As he rubbed over his skin in amazement, he said, a friend from his group leaned over and said, "You

know, those don't rub off..."

"I knew the reason I was there was to get off the fence, and to praise the Lord."

### **An 'incredible experience'**

Souza believes that since the rally, he's been thinking more about the effect his actions have on others. "I think things out more. I think of what I'm going to do, and of the consequences," he said. "It was an incredible experience. It got me going. I don't think of things the same as I used to."

Cathy says that when Michael worked as a chef, he always used to tell his co-workers that "the more we work together, the better we are." Now, she says, she's finding that phrase applies to them, too. For those critics who contend that Promise Keeper men want to be controllers and leaders, she says, "He wants to be equal."

-- Karin Hamilton is editor of Good News, the newspaper in the Diocese of Connecticut.

97-1978

## **New Russian law protects Orthodox Church**

by Michael Barwell

(ENS) Despite protests from religious and government leaders around the world, Russian President Boris Yeltsin signed a new law in late September guaranteeing the Russian Orthodox Church a virtual monopoly on religious activity in post-Communist Russia.

The controversial bill, which Yeltsin had vetoed earlier this year, ensures the Russian Orthodox Church takes a place at the top of a new hierarchy of religious groups, at the same time curtailing the activities and rights of new "sects", --including the Roman Catholic Church.

But Russian Orthodox relationships with the Church of England and the Episcopal Church are now "among the warmest ever," according the Bishop Roger White of Milwaukee, who is co-chair of the coordinating committee for relationships with the Russian Orthodox Church.

"Russia has been inundated by mainline, evangelical and religious sects," White said. "They were being overwhelmed by them." White added that other Christian denomination's efforts to convert Russians--including members of Orthodox congregations--broke long-standing agreements among members of the World Council of Churches not to proselytize, or convert, members of other churches. "They just didn't know what to do."

White added that the Episcopal Church's position has been to support and not be critical of the Russian Orthodox Church. "We are their closest friends, and they are feeling very lonely right now," White said.

"It is even more essential that we continue to build on the very practical relationship between our two churches," said the Rev. David Perry, ecumenical relations officer for the



Episcopal Church. "Trust, mutual respect and partnership are key elements to ensure a continuing witness together in the midst of the many challenges that face the people of Russian and the Russian Orthodox Church."

"Although the law looks very harsh on religious freedom, it is not unexpected," White said. "Russia modelled their law on other European laws, and even on some U.S. laws which bar outsiders from beginning new missionary work without local sponsors."

### **"Sweeping rollback?"**

Critics of the new law were not as kind in their interpretation.

"It is the most sweeping legislative rollback of human rights since the birth of post-Soviet Russia," according to press reports quoting Lawrence Uzzell, a representative of the Keston Institute, which monitors religious freedom in former Communist countries.

While the measure pledges "respect" for Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Buddhism, it accords secondary status to any church or religious organization which has not been present and registered in the country for at least 15 years, or before the collapse of the Soviet empire in the early 1990s. Few religious institutions were allowed to legally operate under the Communist regime--except for the Orthodox Church, which was tolerated and tightly controlled.

The law, strongly endorsed by Patriarch Alexy II, is seen as a move to curb the influence and affluence of American evangelical groups, Roman Catholics, Mormons, and a host of religious sects which have poured enormous amounts of money and personnel into missionary programs in post-Communist Russia.

In the past, Alexy II and other prominent Orthodox leaders have expressed their horror at the assumption that Russia is not a Christian country. They have said they view the Russian Orthodox Church as having survived a 72-year persecution--a mere blink in the church's thousand-plus-year history. Efforts to "reclaim lost souls" by evangelicals and other groups are seen as an affront and invasion by the strongly nationalistic church leaders.

Historically, relationships with Anglican--and subsequently with Episcopal--churches have been extremely cordial. The friendliness dates back to the time of Peter the Great, who was enamored with the European Enlightenment, according to church historians. Anglicans also tend not to proselytize--or seek to convert from other religions -- in Europe. The Russian church in the past was not threatened by Anglican congregations which catered primarily to expatriate and diplomatic communities in major cities.

But even Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey warned that the new law could lead to discrimination against minority religions.

### **Status of Anglican Churches**

How the new law influences the past cordial relationships between the Episcopal/Anglican church and the Russian Orthodox remains to be seen, White said, but for now looks favorable for continuing to be recognized as a long-standing organization.

"We have had an Anglican chaplaincy in Moscow for a long, long time, so it appears it will qualify," White said. That technicality of being officially recognized for at least 15 years--even though St. Andrew's had been seized by Stalin and turned into a warehouse and recording studio--may allow Episcopalians and Russian Orthodox to continue their official

relationships.

During the General Convention in Philadelphia, Bishop Richard Grein of New York warned that U.S. government threats to impose financial sanctions against Russia because of the Religious Freedom Act would be a wrong response. Grein told the bishops during debate of a resolution that U.S. understandings of religious freedom are not universal.

"Russian ideas on freedom of religion are very different from ours," Grein said. "But they are working on it," he said, adding that to withhold money from Russia at such a critical time is the wrong response.

Continuing talks with the Russian Orthodox leaders to foster ecumenical relations, providing practical help, and facilitate exchanges of clergy and lay people will continue in New York after the Frank Griswold is installed as presiding bishop. Archbishop Clement of Kaluga and Borovsk, deputy of the Russian church's department of external affairs, wrote recently that Moscow's external affairs department is being reorganized, and that they would be unable to attend a meeting scheduled for late October.

White discounted dire predictions of significant hardship by all religious organizations. "There will be a leveling time for them to sort out who should be doing what. Although it looks harsh on religious freedom, it is not unexpected."

-- Michael Barwell is deputy director for news and information of the Episcopal Church.

97-1979

## **Technology breakthroughs to enhance communications at Lambeth in 1998**

**by Michael Barwell**

(ENS) Anglican bishops from around the world attending the 1998 Lambeth Conference in Canterbury, England, next summer will be able to keep in touch with their dioceses and each other using the Internet.

"The bishops and conference staff will be sending out news and other information in multi-lingual forms as fast as possible," said the Rev. Peter Moore, an Australian priest serving as a missionary in Uruguay who is heading the electronics media planning team for Lambeth. "They will be able to keep in touch with home and people at home will see the value and usefulness of conferencing here. It will be a two-way deal."

The Lambeth Conference is held every 10 years at the invitation of the archbishop of Canterbury. An international communications planning team for Lambeth recently met at the University of Kent, where an estimated 1,250 bishops, their spouses and staff members will gather for three weeks in July and August next year. Plans include operating a news service, establishing a campus electronic mail system, connecting the conference to the worldwide Internet and establishing web pages for some dioceses or provinces.



"We will be disseminating news and information throughout the Anglican Communion more quickly and widely than at any time in history," said the Rev. Kris Lee, director of telecommunications for the Episcopal Church.

### **An 'instrument of unity'**

"This new capability to communicate through the Inter Anglican Information Networks (IAIN) can be seen as an 'instrument of unity' for the entire Anglican Communion," said Lee. "Now the people in the pews, around the world, can participate almost as it happens."

"This has been a long-term vision of the staff of the Anglican Communion Offices," said the Rev. Joan Ford, director of telecommunications in London. "We've been working hard to make this happen."

The electronic communications team, including Greg Mills and Clifford Hicks of Australia, the Rev. Ron Barnes and the Rev. Ian McKenzie of British Columbia, Canada, and Ricardo Tucas of Chile, also will provide bishops and staff with demonstrations of computer and software equipment, and offer consultations on how to prepare to use them in their home dioceses.

Basic services to be offered on campus include electronic mail for all bishops.

"Each bishop, spouse, and staff member will be assigned an electronic user name when they arrive on campus," Lee explained. "They will be able to use that account during and after the conference when they return home, so that the Lambeth Conference can actually be an ongoing discussion for the Anglican Communion."

A majority of funding for the Lambeth communications project is being supported by grants from Trinity Parish, New York, as part of their global telecommunications ministry for the worldwide Anglican Communion.

Barnes, who manages the Anglican Church of Canada's newest system, NWNNet, said the Lambeth system "will be simple, easy to use, and more secure than normal Internet e-mail or meetings."

More traditional communications devices such as mail, telephone and facsimile services also will be provided at the communications center. That program, led by Jim Rosenthal, director of communications for the Lambeth Conference, will include more than 50 volunteers from various provinces of the Anglican Communion. Presiding bishop-elect Frank Griswold will be one of a six-member team to handle press inquiries, Rosenthal said.

### **Technology breakthrough**

Many of the advanced telecommunications plans for Lambeth are the result of recent breakthroughs in hardware, software, and internet capabilities, the planners explained.

"IAIN is conscious that most Anglicans, up to 70 percent, do not have direct Internet access," Tucas explained. "But IAIN will offer dial-up access for global south users to be connected to the rest of the Anglican Communion and to be able to speak to issues which would be much more difficult by standard mail or very expensive by telephone or fax. The IAIN managers have created a system that will allow easy access and participation throughout the communion."

By installing a new program in several locations, the IAIN networks also will be able

to connect with each other, said Mills, director of the Australasian Christian Communications Network (ACCNNet). An active Anglican lay leader who owns a large computer and telecommunications firm in Deakin, Australia, he added, "Whether our computers are based in Canada, Australia, Africa or the U.S., this new system will allow different networks around the world to be fully integrated and to work with each other. Our worldwide partners have agreed to cooperate in this venture, so that people who are very mobile will now be able to stay in touch around the Anglican Communion," Mills said. "Cooperation is the single biggest strength we have."

"These technological breakthroughs provide an distinct advantage for inclusion, especially for people in the global south," Moore added. "We can now be more than receivers of information, we can now actively participate."

"We will finally be able to operate IAIN the way it was envisioned at Lambeth 1988," Lee said. "We have created a means for helping the conference to communicate, to extend the conference beyond next summer, and provide a means for keeping in touch globally."

The IAIN managers said they plan to inaugurate the new system on Pentecost Sunday 1998, several months before Lambeth.

-- Michael Barwell is deputy director of news and information of the Episcopal Church and will serve as news director at the Lambeth Conference.

97-1980

## **Press applications for Installation of the 25th Presiding Bishop**

(ENS) Members of the press interesting in covering the installation of the 25th Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church in Washington National Cathedral, Saturday, January 10, 1998, are invited to apply for press credentials. An application form is included with this packet (see below).

Because this event is expected to generate media interest and available seating is limited, all diocesan, secular and freelance writers, photographers and videographers will need to be registered in advance. Also, we will be able to issue only one press pass to each news organization.

A notice of approval will be sent.

The Office of News and Information is working with the cathedral to arrange a press conference before the installation and a photo opportunity with the new presiding bishop and his family following the service.

For additional information, please contact the Office of News and Information at 800-334-7626, or 212-922-5384.



**Application for Press Accreditation  
Installation of Bishop Frank Tracy Griswold III  
as 25th Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church  
January 10 at 11 a.m., Washington National Cathedral**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(last) (first)

Publication/Station: \_\_\_\_\_

**Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **FAX:** \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

## Print media

**Circulation:**

**Frequency:**

Type: news, opinion, advocacy, other \_\_\_\_\_

## Electronic media

**Audience:** size \_\_\_\_\_ geographic spread \_\_\_\_\_

Type: radio, broadcast TV, cable TV, indep. film crew, indep. video crew, other

.....

**I will make my own arrangements for accommodations.**

**I need information on accommodations.**

.....

**Please fax or mail this form to: Office of News and Information, Episcopal Church Center, 815 Second Avenue, New York, New York 10017. FAX: 212-557-5827. Our e-mail address is [ens@ecunet.org](mailto:ens@ecunet.org).**



## *news briefs*

97-1981

### **NCC celebrates award of Nobel Prize to anti-landmine campaign**

(ENS) Officials of the National Council of Churches (NCC) hailed the recent decision to award the Nobel Peace Prize to the International Campaign to Ban Landmines. The NCC has been a member of the campaign since 1992 through its relief, development and refugee assistance ministry, Church World Service (CWS). "Those of us in the religious community have long felt the pain of people who have suffered the loss of life and limb through the scourge of landmines," said the Rev. Joan Brown Campbell, NCC general secretary. "We rejoice in this prize and hope it will compel the United States and other nations that have not yet agreed to sign the ban treaty in Ottawa in December to join this life-saving effort." The Rev. Dr. Rodney Page, CWS director, said that during a visit to Cambodia "they told me that their country was being demined one leg at a time. The Nobel Peace Prize is a fitting tribute to those who have lost their lives and the survivors who have inspired the campaign's tireless efforts to allow future generations to walk the earth free of the fear of landmines."

### **Archbishop applauds World Bank's forgiveness of Mozambican debt**

(ENS) Anglican Archbishop Njongonkulu Ndungane of Cape Town, South Africa, recently released a statement praising the World Bank's decision to take steps that could forgive up to 80% of Mozambique's debt. "The writing off of Mozambique's debt will unquestionably result in the country being able to lift itself from the cycle of poverty into which it has been locked for decades," Ndungane said. He cautioned, however, that "there are still many other countries in Africa and elsewhere whose people are living in abject poverty, largely as a result of debts incurred by their governments in the past." He pleaded for international finance institutions to provide similar relief to those countries.

### **Church urges Catholics not to reject gay offspring**

(ENS) The U.S. Catholic bishops recently issued a pastoral letter imploring parents of gay children not to reject their sons and daughters even though church doctrine condemns homosexual activity. In the document, the bishops said that homosexual orientation is not freely chosen and that parents must love and support their gay children in a society full of rejection and discrimination. "All in all, it is essential to recall one basic truth. God loves every person as a unique individual. Sexual identity helps to define the unique person we are," the bishops said. "God does not love someone any less simply because he or she is homosexual." The document, titled "Always Our Children," was approved by the administrative board of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops early in September.



## **First cathedral school girl's choir inaugurated**

Twenty-four young women, all students at the National Cathedral School for Girls (NCS) in Washington, recently became members of the first Episcopal cathedral girl's choir associated with a cathedral school in the U.S. During the October 9 Evensong, the students were commissioned by Bishop Ronald Haines of Washington and Dean Nathan Baxter in the great choir of the cathedral. Directed by Bruce Neswick, who also serves as music director for NCS and St. Albans School, the girls choir sang for the first time. The choir will sing Thursday Evensongs throughout the fall and will perform during the Christmas season. In the fall of 1998, the girl's choir will join the men's choir at the principal Sunday Eucharist once each month.

## **Lutheran church closed under new Russian law**

(ENS) The authorities in the Russian Republic of Khakassia recently revoked the registration of the Evangelical Lutheran Mission of Khakassia "in accordance with the adoption of the law on freedom of conscience and religious organization." Under the law, which was recently signed by Yeltsin, "religious groups" that cannot prove they have existed in Russia for at least 15 years will have fewer rights than registered "religious organizations." The Evangelical Lutheran Mission was registered in June 1996. The Rev. Pavel Zayakin, the mission's director in Khakassia, argued that Lutheranism has existed in Russia for more than 400 years. He added that the mission will file a court appeal against the Khakassian authorities. Supporters of the religion law have said it is aimed primarily against cults and "totalitarian sects," not "real religions."

## **Churches must not be the 'lap-dog' of the state, Tutu warns**

(ENI) Desmond Tutu, former Anglican archbishop of Cape Town and current chairman of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Committee, recently warned that churches must not be the "lap-dog" of the state. He said that churches must always reserve the right to be "in critical solidarity" with the state. He was speaking at the opening day of the All Africa Conference of Churches' (AACC) 7th general assembly, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Tutu, AACC's president, made his remarks in reply to the welcoming speech by Ethiopia's president, Dr. Negasso Gidada. Thanking churches around the world for their past assistance to Ethiopia, Gidada encouraged Africa's churches to use their moral and spiritual authority to enhance development and teach toleration and common understanding. Declaring that the international community was not doing enough to help Africa eradicate poverty, hunger and disease, Gidada said the churches were called upon to exert maximum efforts towards the mobilization of resources from inside and outside Africa. Tutu praised Gidada's vision, but warned that uncritical cooperation with the state was a trap for churches. "A church that agrees to be co-opted into the government system is a lap-dog and is not a church of God," he said.

## **Church leader asks UN official to renew Middle East peace efforts**

(ENI) The head of the Armenian Apostolic Church (Oriental Orthodox) based in Lebanon has called on the United Nations to renew its efforts to achieve Middle East peace and the full independence of Lebanon. In a recent meeting with UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, Catholicos Aram I of Cilicia, Lebanon, emphasized the necessity of "giving a new push, a new dynamism to the peace process." Aram said he also called for the UN to address human rights issues "more



seriously." He spoke particularly of the need for self-determination for the people of Nagorno-Karabagh, a predominantly Muslim region surrounded by Azerbaijan and populated largely by Armenians. Aram, who is moderator of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in Geneva, also told Annan that the WCC and the UN should develop a closer working relationship.





## reviews and resources

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97-1982

### **NCC invites congregations to environmental justice covenant**

(ENS) The National Council of Churches (NCC) is inviting local congregations across the United States to make a promise to engage in environmental ministries through worship, learning, lifestyle changes and community involvement. "This 'covenant congregation' program is necessary if the church is to take the task of restoring and protecting God's creation seriously," said the Rev. Richard Killmer, NCC environmental justice program director. "As church people become more aware of the challenge of environmental degradation, this is the ideal time for recommitment to . . . environmental justice ministries," he said. In the "Environmental Justice Covenant Congregation Program," congregations vote to covenant and then sign an official form. The program provides ideas and resources to be used for worship, learning and teaching, lifestyle considerations, and community, national and global involvement. Environmental justice covenant congregations packets have been sent to 6,300 recipients already, including environmental justice coordinators and other pastors and laypeople who have provided leadership around this issue. For a free copy of the packet, contact Environmental Justice Resources, NCC, P.O. Box 968, Elkhart, Indiana 46515, or call 800-726-0968 or 219-264-3102. For more information about the program, contact the NCC's Environmental Justice office at 212-870-2385.

### **ECTN to air conference on the nature of organizations**

(ENS) Why do we try to solve organizational problems by reaching for new structures, policies and roles? In these complex structures we've created, what's happened to personal creativity, commitment and passion? How can we create and lead organizations that succeed in inspiring people to contribute far beyond current levels? These questions and others will be addressed by Dr. Margaret Wheatley, a leading organizational consultant and author of *Leadership and the New Science*. According to Wheatley, we are capable of creating far more effective and meaningful organizations if we can tap into people's desire for connection to their work and if we rethink our beliefs about the very nature of organizations. The Episcopal Cathedral Teleconferencing Network (ECTN) will air *Creating Organizations that Support Great Work* on Wednesday, November 19, 1997 at 1-4 p.m. Eastern Standard Time. ECTN is also airing the teleconference *Sharing Our Spiritual Riches: living the wisdom of the world's religious traditions*, on Sunday, November 23, 1997, 5-6:30 p.m. Eastern Standard Time. On January 10, 1998, ECTN will broadcast the installation of Bishop Frank T. Griswold, III as the 25th Presiding Bishop. Call (800) 559-3286 to register your downlink location or to find the downlink nearest to you.

### **'Burning Issues' conference to tackle sexuality debate**

(ENS) The Virginia Diocesan Center at Roslyn in Richmond, Virginia, will host its third



"Burning Issues" conference on the church's sexuality debate, December 8-9. The conference theme is *Gospel Opportunity or Gospel Threat? The Church's Sexuality Debate*. Speakers include Dr. Louie Crew, co-founder of Integrity, a fellowship for gay and lesbian Episcopalians; the Rev. Gray Temple, Jr., rector of St. Patrick's Episcopal Church in Atlanta; Diane Knippers, director of the Institute on Religion and Democracy and a board member of the American Anglican Council (AAC); and Bishop James Stanton of Dallas, president of the AAC. The conference is "an attempt to move the conversation about sexuality from the legislative arena to one more conducive to reason and dialogue and to raise the level of theological discourse on these concerns," according to organizers. The fee for the overnight conference is \$85; the commuter rate is \$65. For additional conference information and registration, call 800-477-6296.

### **Sexual harassment and exploitation awareness videos available**

(ENS) Four videos on the subject of sexual harassment and sexual exploitation are being recommended by Barbara Blodgett, pastoral response coordinator for the Diocese of Connecticut. *Ask Before You Hug*, a video featuring six vignettes that illustrate harassment in different church scenarios, is available from Ecu-Film, 810 Twelfth Avenue South, Nashville, TN, 37203. *Understanding the Sexual Boundaries of the Pastoral Relationship* is a three-part video focusing on sexual harassment, sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. It is available from the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis communications department, 612-291-4411. *Reducing the Risk*, a videotape and training manual, is available from Church Law and Tax Report, P.O. Box 1098, Matthews, NC 28106, 800-222-1840. *Hear Their Cries*, focusing on child abuse and its impact, is available from the Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence, 936 N. 34th Street, Suite 200, Seattle, WA 98103.

### **Photographs available in this issue of ENS:**

1. Episcopalians participate in Promise Keepers rally in Washington (97-1976)
2. Michael Souza of Old Saybrook, Connecticut says Promise Keepers rally moved him "off the fence" (97-1977)
3. Washington National Cathedral site for installation of new presiding bishop (97-1980)

\* This photo is available in color.

The Episcopal News Service is available electronically. QUEST users can join the "Episcopal News Service" meeting to receive full versions of all stories or join "ENS Digest" to receive the digest versions of our news stories. Web users can visit the official Episcopal Church website at [www.ecusa.anglican.org](http://www.ecusa.anglican.org).